

## Curricular Connections

# Young Beech: Messenger of the Forest

---

### Place-based Ecology and Natural History:

Forests as superorganisms is a major theme in this story, discussing how the benefit of the whole depends on the healthy functioning of its parts. The concept of a resilient forest based on biodiversity, is at its heart. Mini lessons on what “gifts” plants provide is featured in the beginning: everything from scents to medicines, to snacks (for human and wildlife) to utilitarian uses of plants is described. The spring rain phenomenon of creating more tipsy trees is also in this story and though resolves with a fictitious end to the problem, conveys the need to watch out for leaning trees in the forest while hiking if there has been heavy rains or wind! The fact that Beech hold their leaves much later into the year than any other deciduous tree (except for oak) is also a fact to be learned in this story and might help one identify beech in the future.

### Explore:

- Go exploring for some of the plants mentioned in the story. See if you can find, White Pine, Bayberry, Sweet Fern, Shadbush Maple, Oak, Huckleberry, and of course, Beech!
- Find a new plant and research it. What did you learn about the gifts that this species provides to the world?

### Reflect and Share:

- What is a gift that you can give to your family, or make for your house, or offer to the forest?
- Have you ever felt like you don't have any special talents or gifts? Reflect on what you love to do and identify something that you are proud of about yourself.

### Photos:

